



# Masjid al-Qiblatayn (Somalia)

By *the Editors of the Madain Project*

Masjid al-Qiblatayn (Arabic: **مَسْجِدُ الْقِبْلَتَيْنِ**), also known as Labo-qibla mosque is a mosque in Zeila, situated in the northwestern Awdal region of Somalia.

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## Overview

It is one of the oldest mosques in Africa. It contains the tomb of Sheikh Babu Dena. Though now mostly in ruins, the edifice features two mihrabs: one oriented to the north toward Mecca, and the other oriented to the northwest toward Jerusalem. The mosque, which translates to "Mosque of the two Qiblahs", dates its construction to the 7th century CE, shortly after the [Abyssinian Hijrah](#) (هجرة) of Muslims to what was then Abyssinia.



circa

870–

750

BCE



If it's true that this dates from the 600s, then it could be the oldest standing mosque in the country by at least a few centuries. It's also an international rarity as an ancient double mihrab. Only few of the features of

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the old mosque remain standing including an arch on the right with the 2 square windows and the columns with the rosettes intact and a bent minaret. Another mosque, also known as the [Masjid Qiblatayn](#), is located in the city of Medina.

circa  
870–  
750  
BCE



The construction of this Mosque is tied to the History of Islam in Somalia. In Zeila, a Dir city, the mosque Masjid al-Qiblatayn is known as the site of where early companions of the Prophet, and the local Somalis, established a mosque shortly after the first [Migration to Abyssinian](#). By the 7th century, a large-scale conversion to Islam was taking place in Somalia, first spread by the Dir clan family, from their construction of this mosque, to the rest of the nation afterwards.

## Islam in the Sub-saharan Africa

circa  
870–  
750  
BCE



Zeila existed before the Islam spread in Sub-saharan African. The two Mehrab (Qiblatayn) Mosque is the evidence of these argument, because Qiblatayn's one direction faced Mecca and one facing Jerusalem and early Muslims praying toward Jerusalem and some historians claim that Prophet Muhammed's family (reference to the migrants) travelled through Saylac to Aksum in the mid 17th century.

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